



NEWS

*United States Department of Justice
U. S. Attorney, Eastern District of Louisiana
500 Poydras Street, Suite B210
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130*

JIM LETTEN, UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

News releases are posted at our website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/lae

Contact: Immediate Release
Kathy English February 14, 2007
(504) 680-3068

ARSONIST RESPONSIBLE FOR COVINGTON COUNTRY CLUB FIRE SENTENCED TO 70 MONTHS IMPRISONMENT AND ORDERED TO PAY RESTITUTION

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA - WILLIAM A. TARPEIN, 28, of Covington, Louisiana, was sentenced to 70 months imprisonment to be followed by three (3) years of supervised release following imprisonment and ordered to pay almost \$393,986.12 in restitution for intentionally setting fire to the Covington Country Club on August 13, 2006, announced U. S. Attorney Jim Letten today.

PRESS RELEASE

Page - 2 -

February 14, 2007

TARPEIN was first arrested and charged federally on August 16, 2006, based on facts uncovered in an investigation by Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). On September 14, 2006, a federal grand jury returned a one-count indictment charging TARPEIN with committing the arson in violation of federal law. On November 15, 2006, TARPEIN pled guilty as charged to the indictment.

The fire at the Covington Country Club was discovered in the early morning hours of August 13, 2006. The building, which included multiple retail businesses, was badly damaged.

Investigators from the Louisiana State Fire Marshal's office responded to the country club fire and requested the assistance of ATF agents in investigating the fire. ATF Certified Fire Investigators examined the fire scene and determined that the fire was intentionally set. The investigation also revealed that a large amount of United States currency was missing from the country club. ATF's investigation revealed that TARPEIN committed the burglary of the country club then set the fire using gasoline from a garden sprayer in order to conceal the burglary.

Letten added, "This conviction and sentence is another fine example of the ongoing partnership between federal and state agencies which resulted in the swift apprehension, prosecution and imprisonment of the individual responsible for the arson. We, at the federal level, will continue to aggressively prosecute these crimes whenever jurisdiction exists."

PRESS RELEASE

Page - 3 -

February 14, 2007

This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Matthew Coman.